

REMARKS

I. Status of Claims

Claims 15-17 and 20-27 are pending in the application. Claims 15 and 20 are the independent claims. Claims 1-14 were previously canceled and claims 18 and 19 are currently canceled without prejudice to and/or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. Claims 21-26 are currently amended to correct minor editorial errors. Thus, no new matter is added.

Claims 18 and 19 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Tomatsu (USP 5,998,268) ("Tomatsu").

Claims 15-17 and 20-27 are allowed.

The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the rejections in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 15-17 and 20-27 are allowed.

III. Pending Claims

Claims 18 and 19 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Tomatsu (USP 5,998,268) ("Tomatsu").

Without waiving any argument, and to advance prosecution, claims 18 and 19 are currently canceled without prejudice to and/or disclaimer of the subject matter therein.

In view of the foregoing amendments, the Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, the Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in all aspects in allowable condition, and earnestly solicits favorable reconsideration and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (202) 220-4420 to discuss any matter concerning this application. The Office is authorized to charge any fees related to this communication to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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